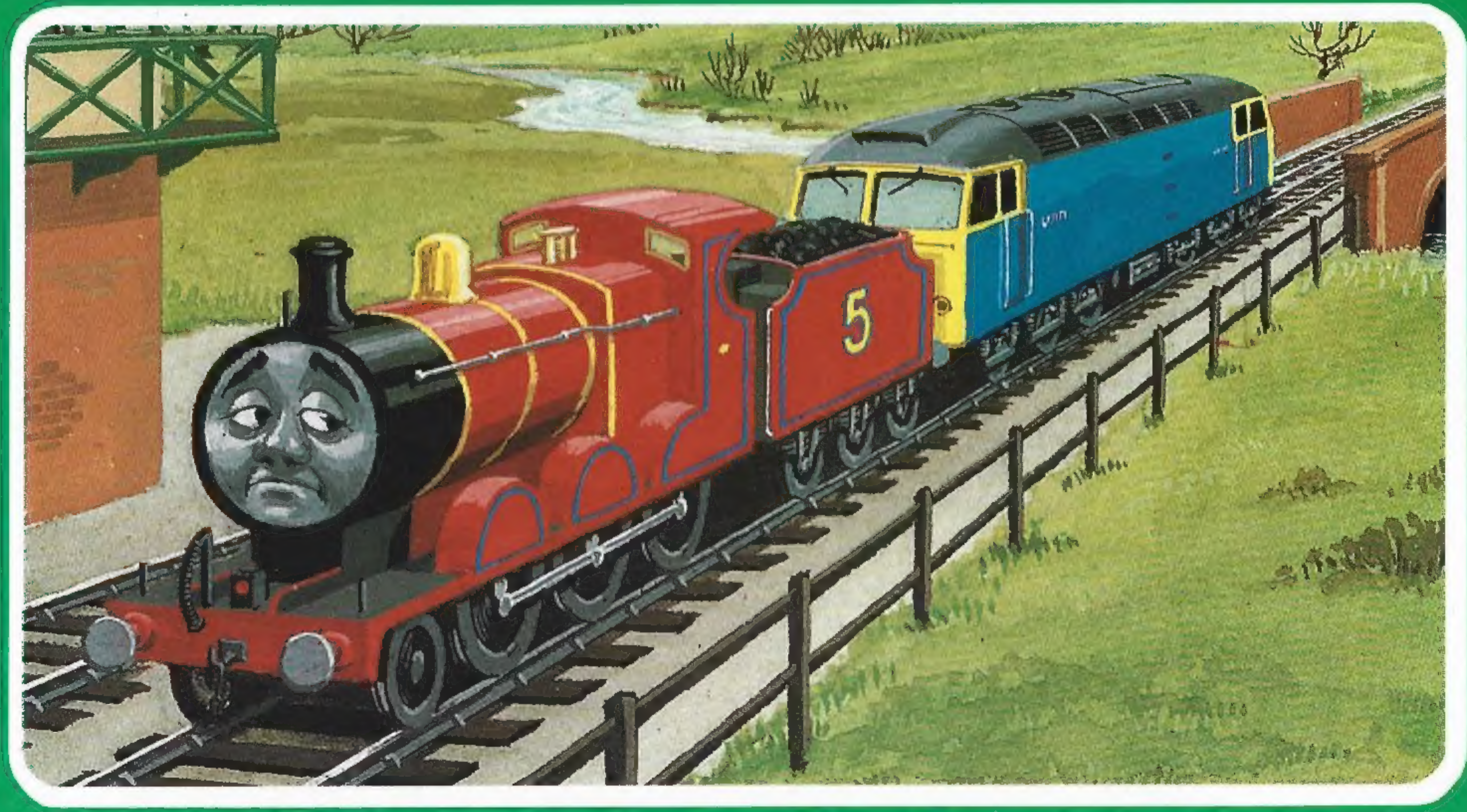


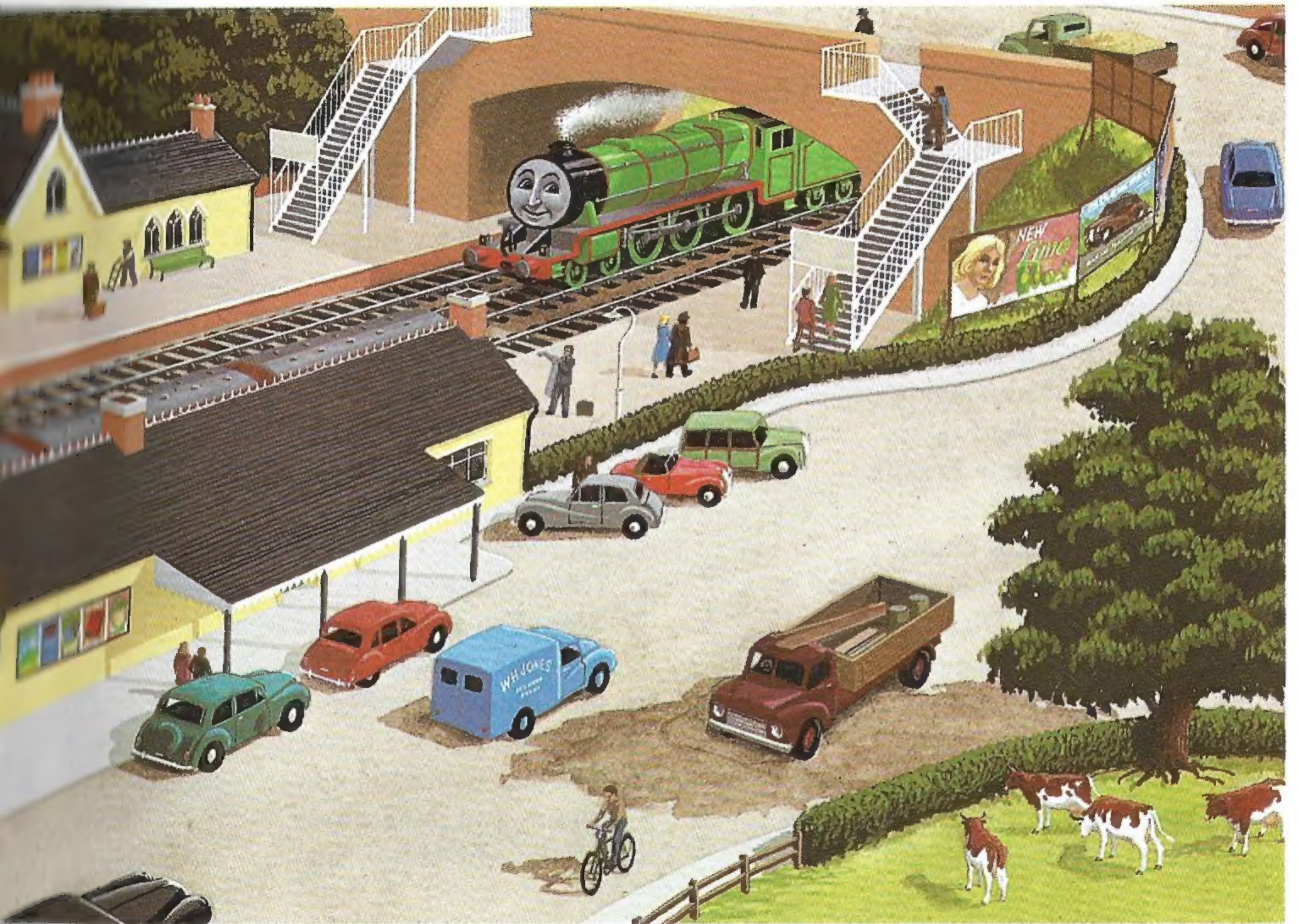
THE RAILWAY SERIES No. 28

James and the Diesel Engines



CHRISTOPHER AWDRY





Titles in this series

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2. Thomas the Tank Engine
3. James the Red Engine
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5. Troublesome Engines
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JAMES AND THE DIESEL ENGINES

CHRISTOPHER AWDRY

with illustrations by
CLIVE SPONG

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DEAR FRIENDS,

To hear James talk sometimes you might have thought that he ran the Fat Controller's Railway on his own. He certainly needed no help from diesels – or so he imagined. The other engines were more sensible, and realised that diesels could take some of the weight off their own couplings. But now the Fat Controller tells me that James has had a change of heart. These stories tell you how it happened.

THE AUTHOR

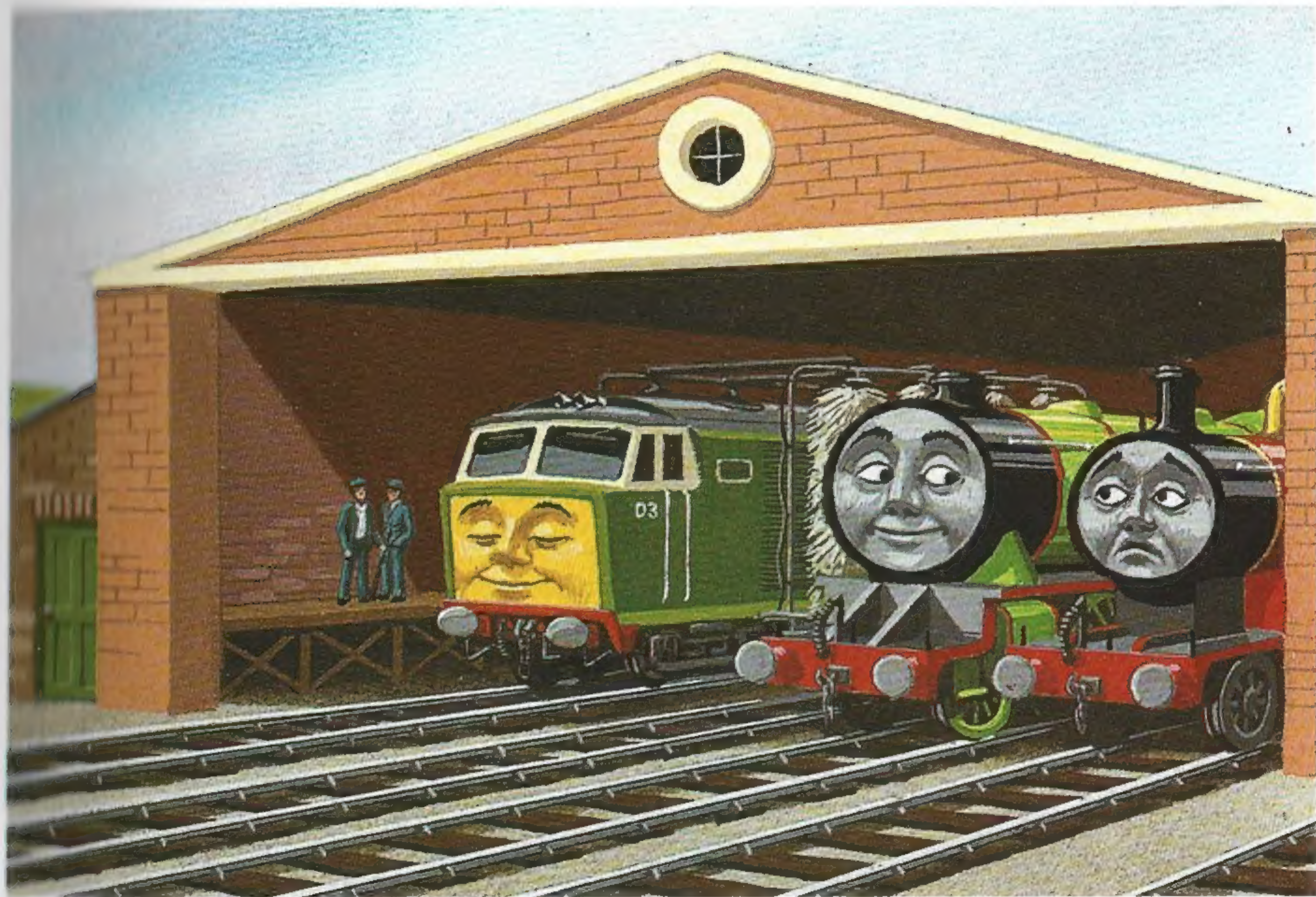
Old Stuck-Up

THE FAT CONTROLLER preferred steam engines on his Railway, but he found diesels useful because they could pull either coaches or trucks.

“You’re versatile,” he would say to them.
“Real mixed-traffic engines.”

BoCo and Bear were proud of this, but James was not impressed. He liked these two diesels but he treated all others with deep suspicion.

“Diesels don’t use coal and water,” he would say darkly. “How can you trust an engine who isn’t normal in his habits?”



Visiting diesels sometimes boasted about how special they were: usually BoCo and Bear had to spend the next day smoothing ruffled feelings.

One day a particularly haughty diesel came from the Other Railway. When the visitor found that he was to share the Shed with steam engines he stopped outside in disgust and refused to go any further.

“Why on earth does your Controller keep such out-of-date objects?” he growled rudely. “Dirty, smoky, slow things. Ugh!”

He shuddered delicately.



“On our Railway,” the diesel continued loftily, “steam engines are kept strictly in their place and not allowed on the main line without special permission.”

BoCo, who was showing the diesel round, lost patience.

“Stay outside then if you’re so proud about it,” he said crossly. “I’m going to join my friends.”

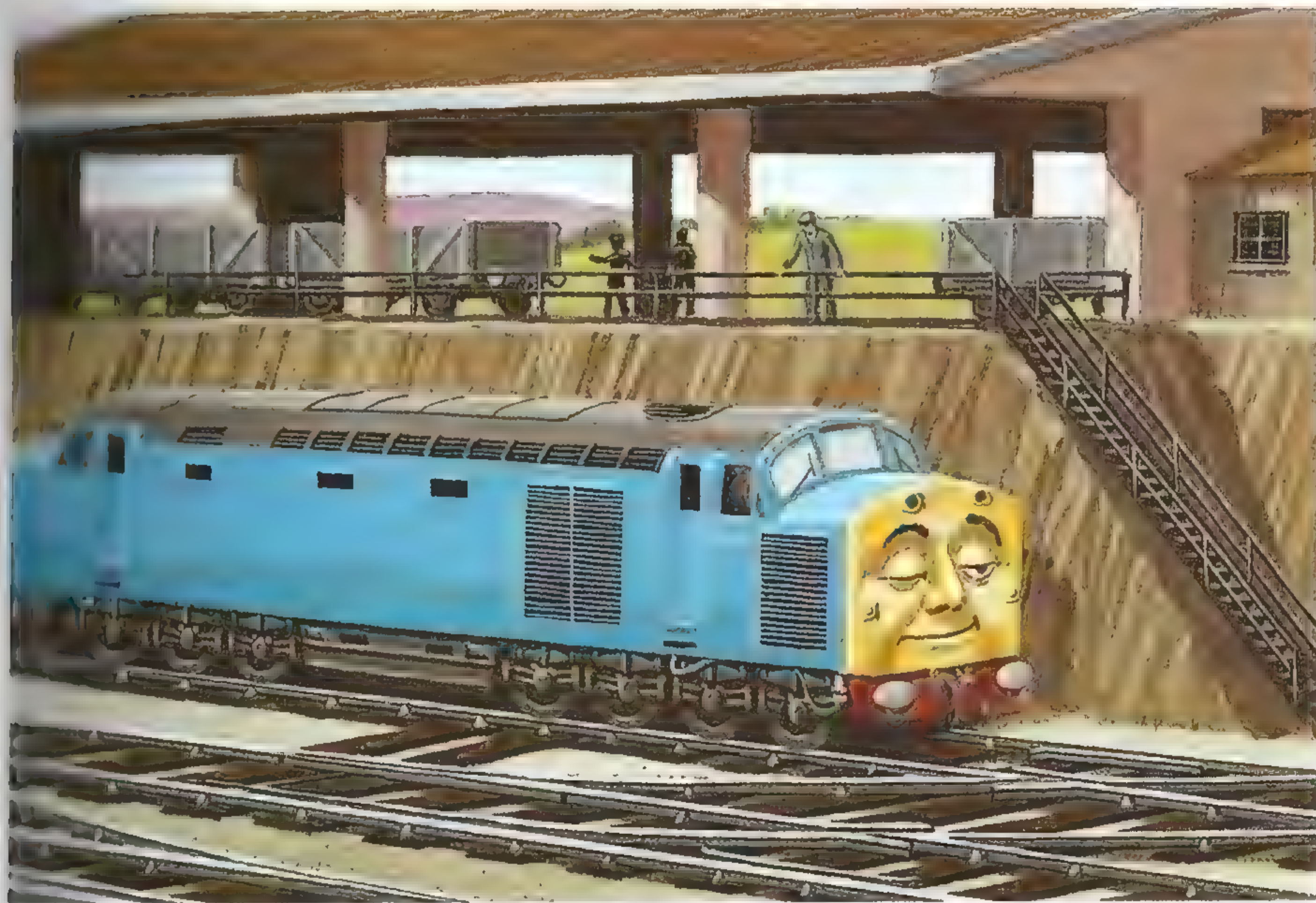
“I hope it’s cold tonight and he can’t start in the morning,” snorted James. “At least someone might want to preserve us. Who’d need him? Old Stuck-up!”



The engines were glad when morning came. They went to fetch their trains as early as they could, and the visitor was left alone.

“That’s better,” he purred to himself. “How can an engine rest in all that hissing and clanking?”

The cleaning equipment and fuel supply were in the part of the Shed which BoCo and Bear shared. Old Stuck-up was so full of self-importance that he had forgotten he would need cleaning and re-fuelling before he went home.



It was getting late when he remembered.

“If I go in now while the Shed is empty,” he said to himself, “no-one will know I’ve been.”

He scuttled forward quickly. Too quickly. The rails where Bear and BoCo had stood were oily and when he tried to stop, he couldn’t.

“Brakeblocks and buffers, I’m slipping!” he wailed, as his wheels locked and slithered. He shut his eyes as, with a despairing whoop of horror, he crashed into the wall at the end of the Shed.



The diesel was not badly damaged, but a dreadful draught came through the hole in the wall. When the other engines came home they heard the story from Douglas, who had cleared up the mess.

“Ho, ho, ho,” chortled Henry. “Old Stuck-up came unstuck, did he? I say BoCo, what is it the Fat Controller calls you?”

“Versatile,” chuckled BoCo, “but that isn’t what he called Stuck-up. I couldn’t hear all he said, but I didn’t think it sounded very polite.”



Crossed Lines

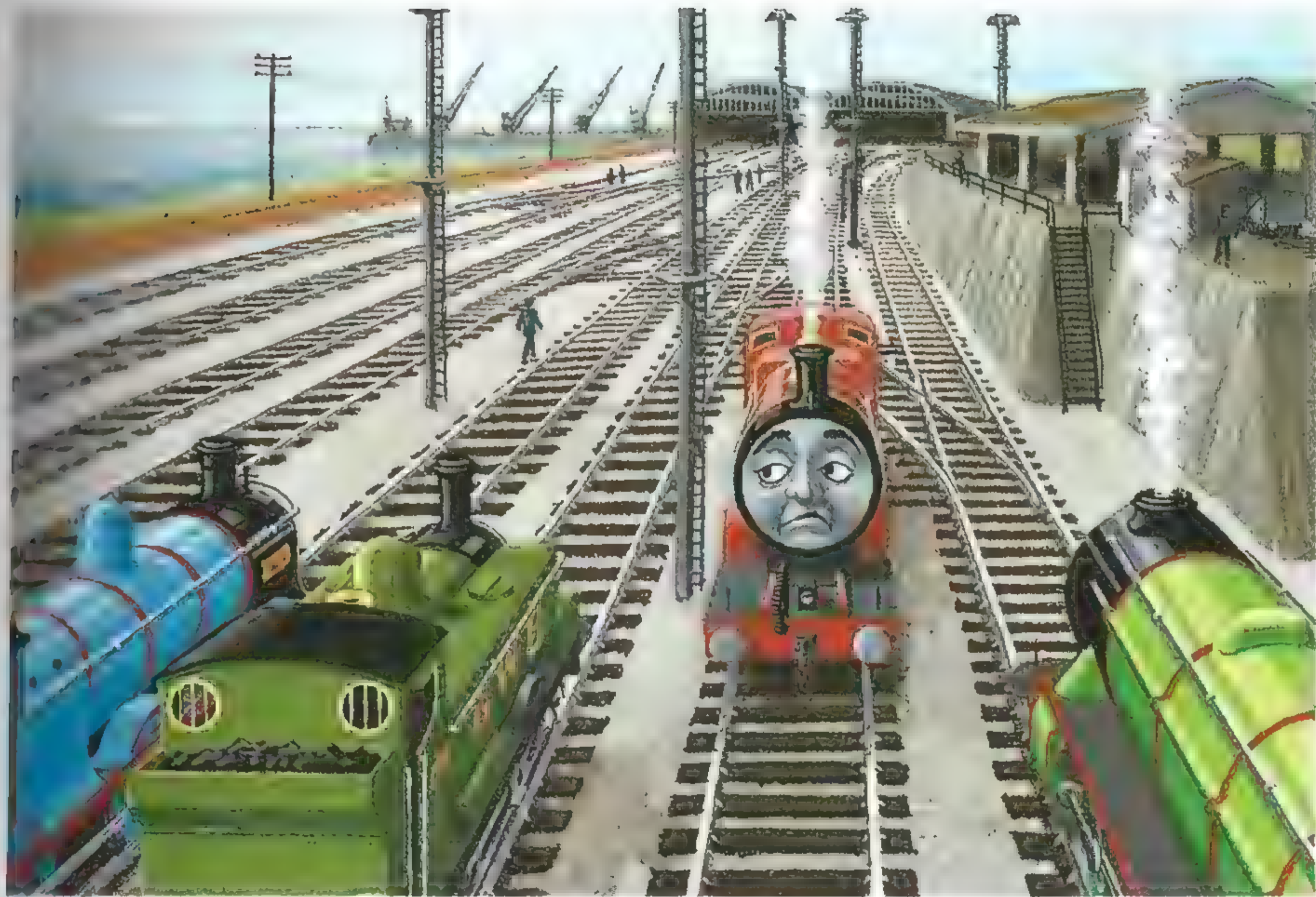
MOST of the Fat Controller's engines accepted diesels. James had never liked them.

"They're all right," said Henry. "Just mixed-traffic engines like you and me."

"Mixed-up engines, you mean," James grunted. "With windows at each end how can they know if they're coming or going?"

"Toby has two cabs," remarked Duck, "and he gets on all right."

"Toby's just a little engine," scoffed James. "If an important engine like me didn't know which way to turn, what would the Railway come to?"



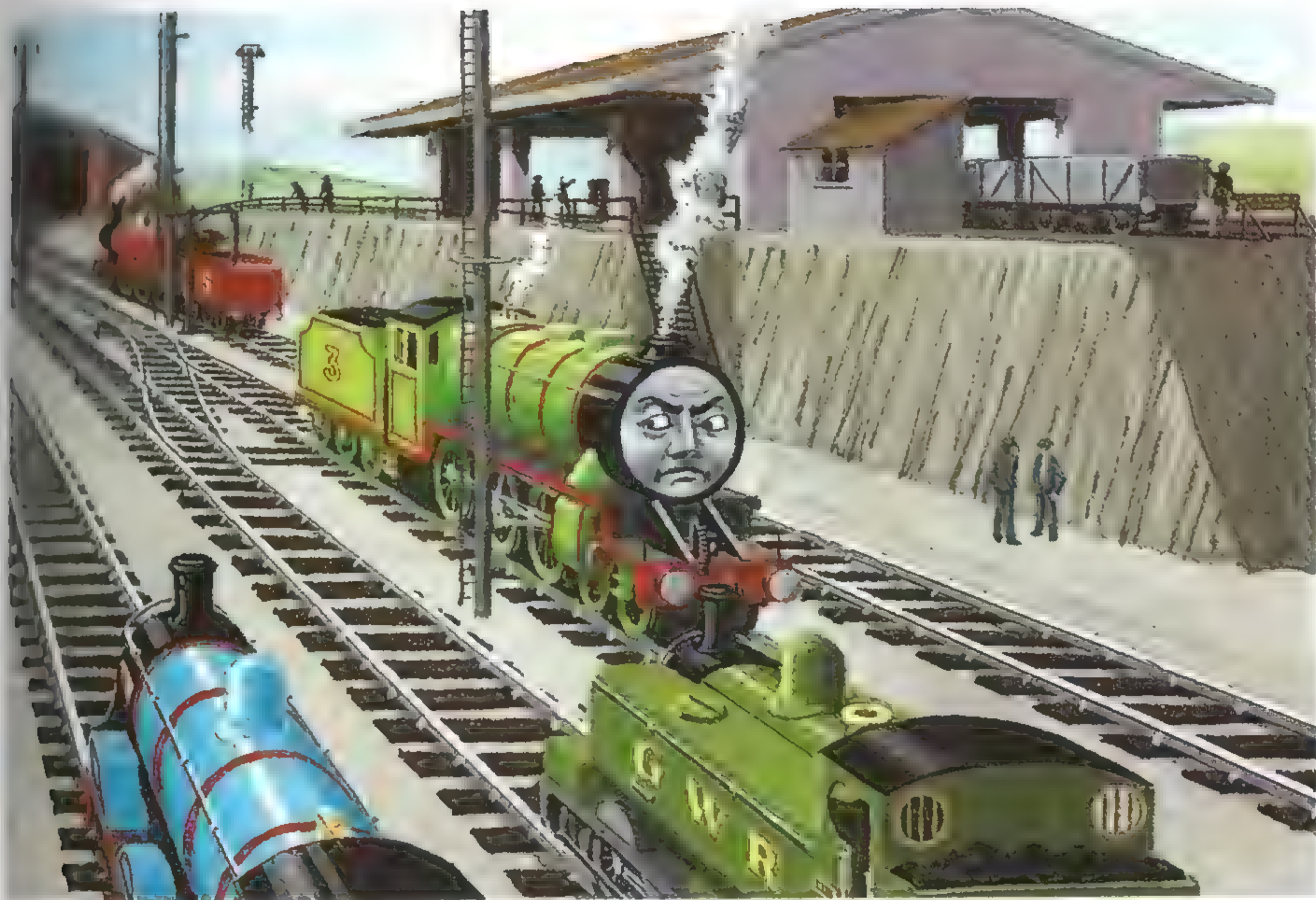
All the engines agreed that James was becoming much too puffed up in his smokebox.

“Making out he’s Royalty or something,” grumbled Henry. “It’s disgusting.”

“I knew an engine called King James,” remarked Duck. “In the old days, at Paddington. King James I he was, but he didn’t swank about like that.”

“Och, dinna be telling James that,” pleaded Donald. “It’s even mair of a misery he’ll be makin’ oor lives.”

“Exactly,” agreed Henry, “but who’s going to trim his wheels for him?”

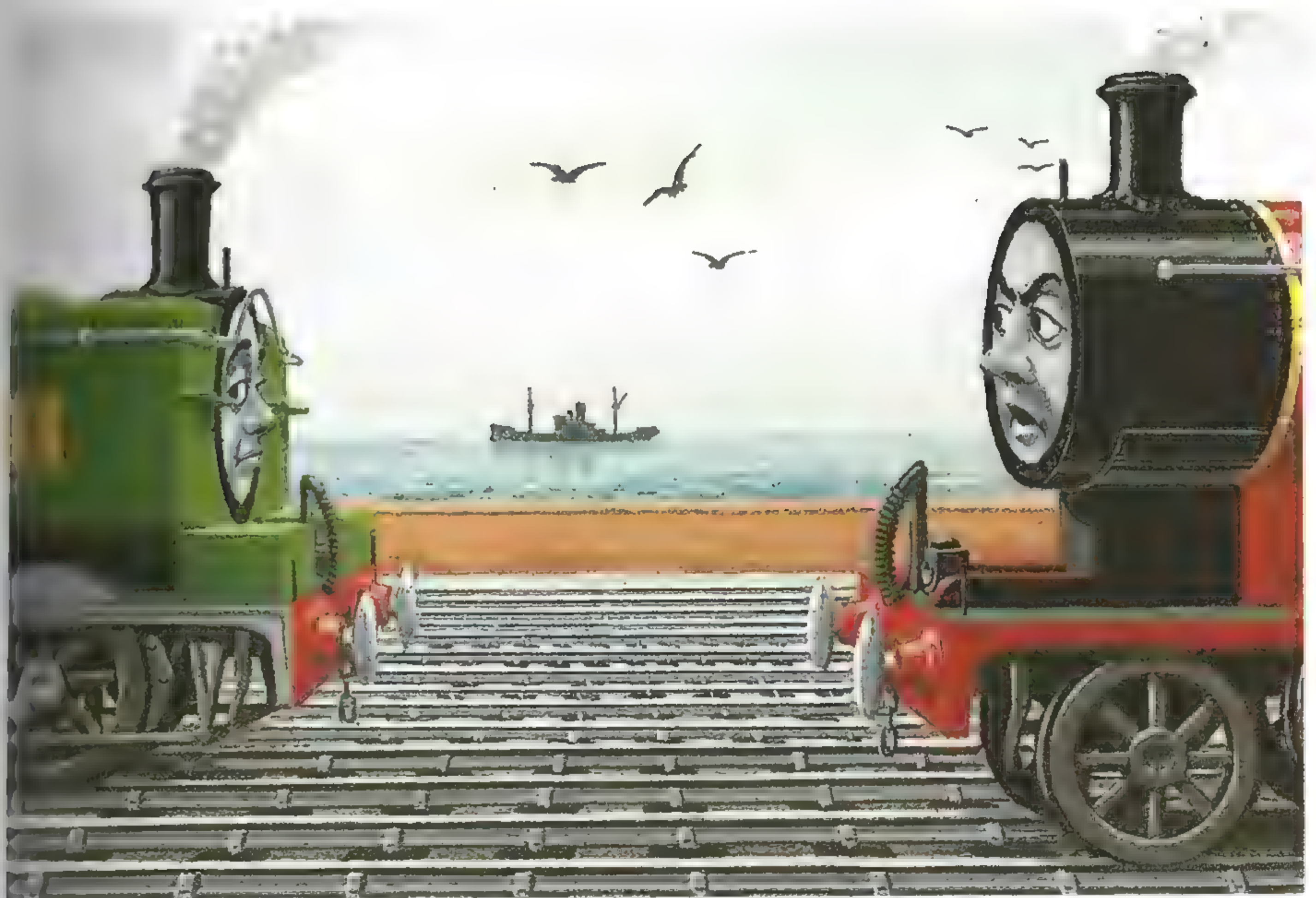


The engines tried all sorts of ideas, but nothing worked. James grew so conceited that the others were glad when he was away. Even the coaches twittered anxiously to each other if they thought he was to pull them.

One day James came to the Shed, fuming with rage.

“Shunting!” he snorted. “Where are Donald and Douglas? They should be here for jobs like that.”

But the Twins were helping on Edward’s branch line, so James had to do the work himself.



James's train had long trucks called well-wagons. These have bogie-wheels at each end, with a low section between them. They are used to carry cars, tractors and other heavy machinery.

The shunting should have been easy, but James was cross and bumped the trucks.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!" they cried. Some of them slipped their brakes "on" to spite James. The weather was damp and misty too, so the shunting took a long time.

At last James had only two trucks to fetch before his train was ready.



Because of the mist the signalman sometimes found it hard to see what was happening. James's driver told him that James would whistle when they had collected all the trucks and were clear of the points. They had almost finished when suddenly James heard a sharp "Peep peep" from another engine close by.

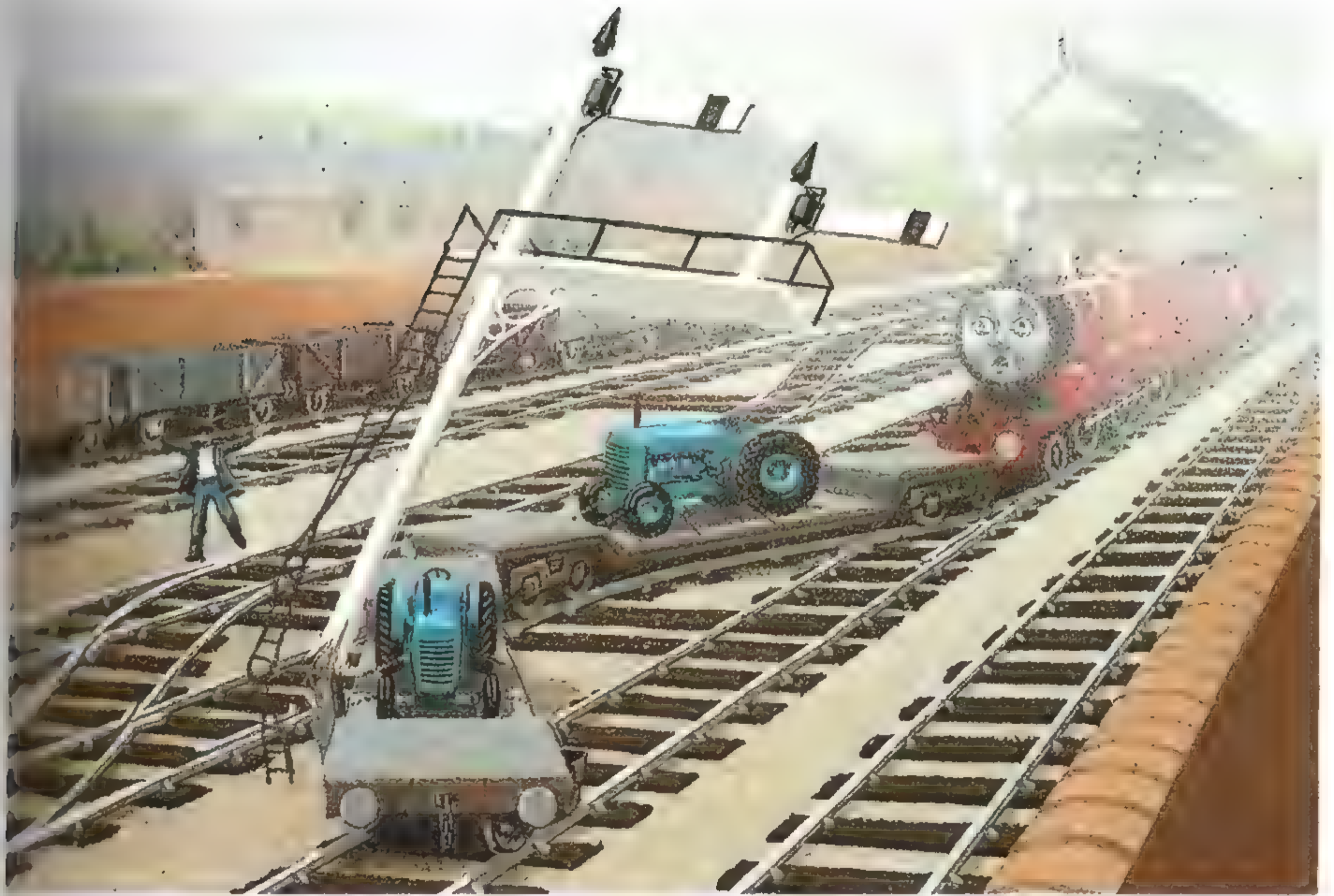
The signalman heard it too, and thought it was James saying he was ready. He pulled the lever, setting the points for the main line.



But James wasn't ready. The points changed when one of the trucks was halfway over them; one bogie went the right way, but the other was diverted towards the main line. Before James realised it, the truck was travelling sideways between the two lines. A signal stood right in its path.

“Stop!” squealed the truck, but it was too late. The signal toppled to the ground with a crash, just missing James.

“That's torn it!” said James's driver. “The Fat Controller won't like that.”

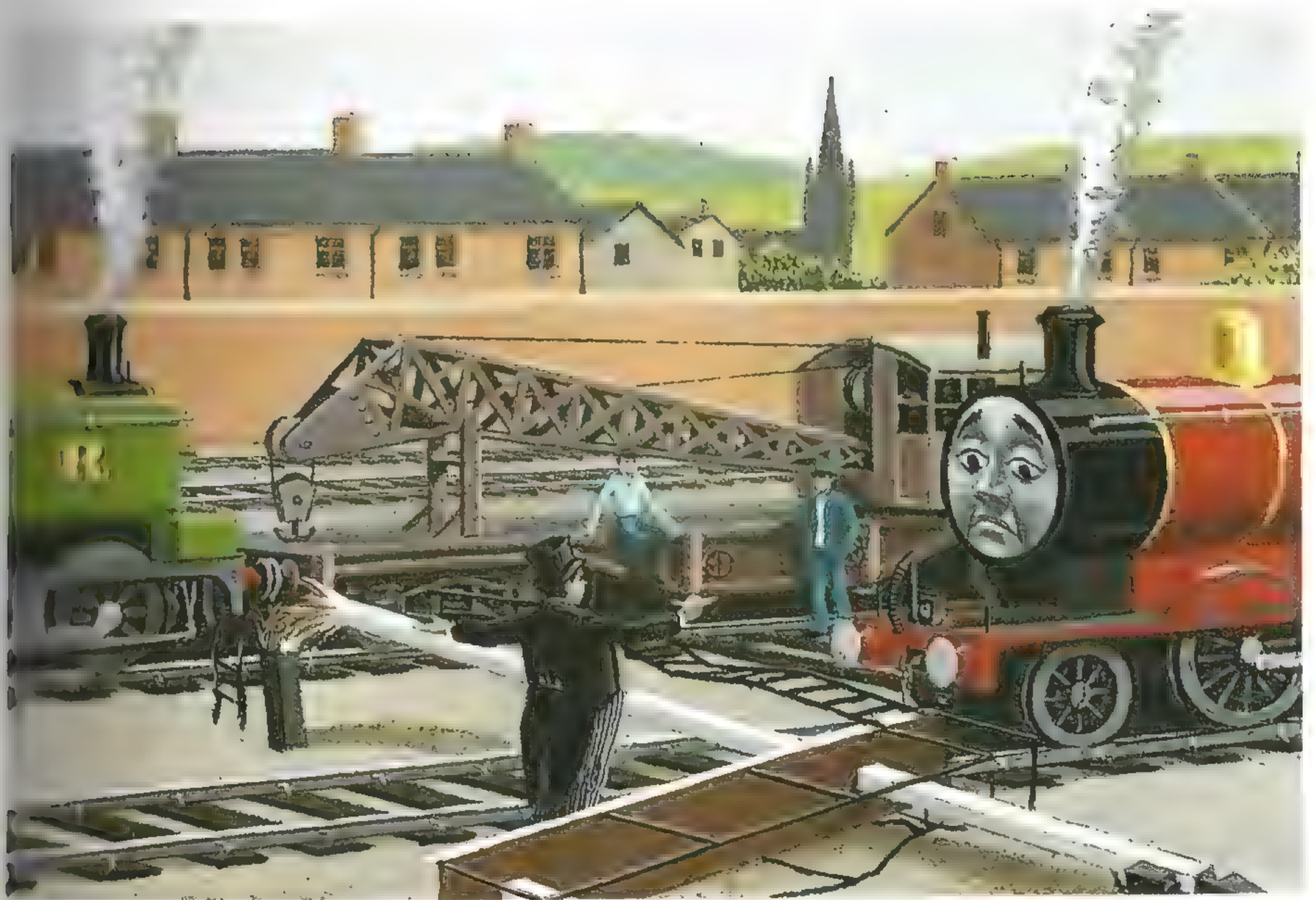


He didn't. He spoke severely about it, because the signal was important and its loss was inconvenient.

James knew that the accident was not his fault, but he was unusually quiet in the Shed that evening. The others were relieved.

“I suppose it *must* be difficult to know which way to go when you've got two cabs,” whispered a voice, “but to go two ways at once with only one cab – that really is something!”

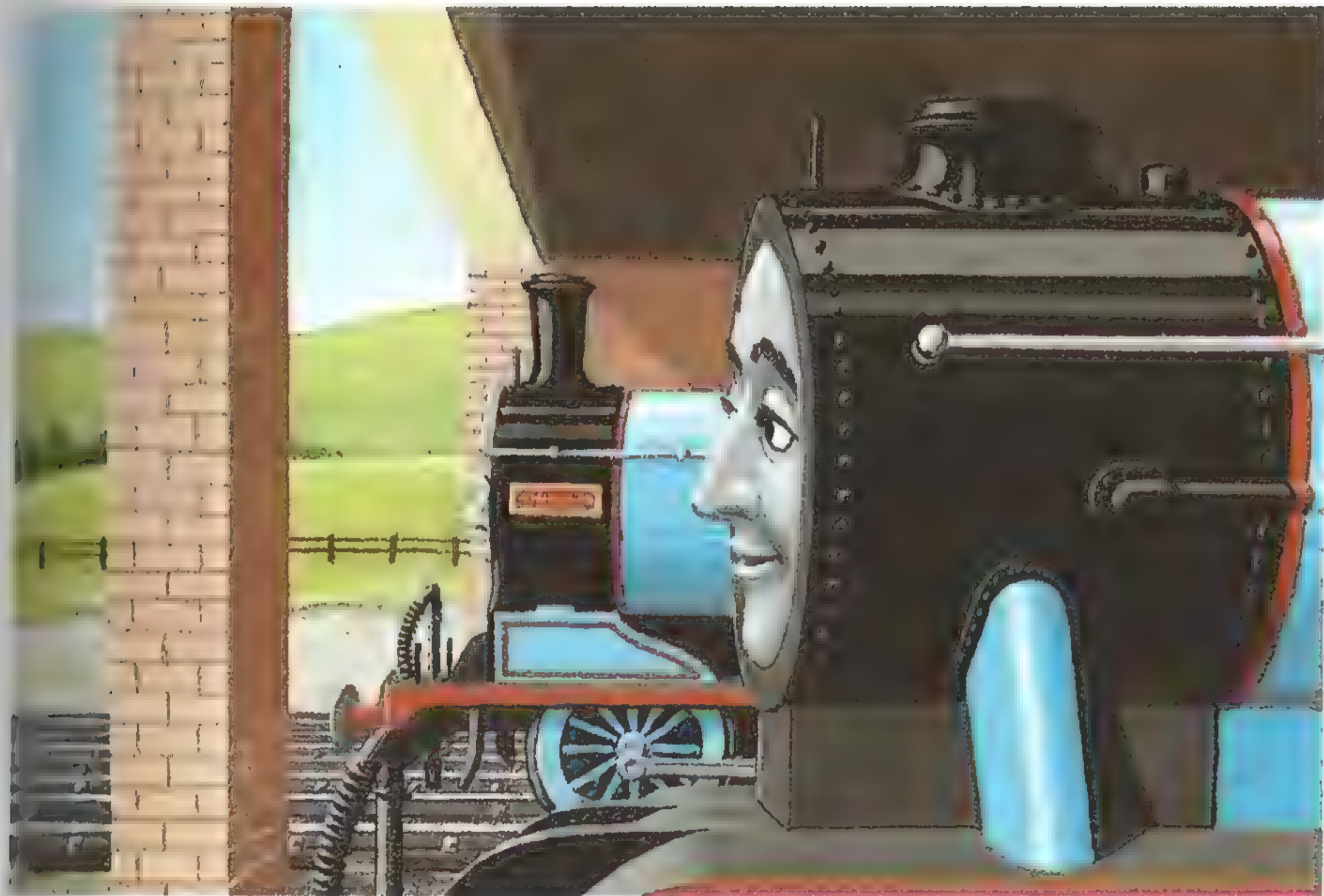
James pretended he hadn't heard.



Fire-Engine

“‘FLYING SCOTSMAN’ and my brothers were all green,” explained Gordon one night in the Shed. “It was all very well in its way, but now I prefer my blue. It makes me different, you see, and that’s very suitable for an important engine like me.”

“The engines on oor auld line used to be blue,” remembered Donald, “but nae sae dark as we are. Dougie and me never were though – we had to be black, sae blue makes a nice change.”



“I like my green too,” agreed Henry. “I’d hate to be red like James. People would think I was a fire-engine.”

“At least people can see me coming,” retorted James. “I don’t disappear into the background like some engines I could mention. If it wasn’t for the noise, you’d need a yellow and black front like Mavis.”

Henry’s protests were drowned in the laughter of the other engines, and he went to sleep wondering how to pay James out.



Henry was still cross next morning.

“What can be wrong? What can be wrong?” wondered the coaches anxiously as Henry pulled noisily away from the Big Station.

“Do come along, do come along,” Henry snorted impatiently.

They had a fast run, but it didn't improve Henry's temper. He bumped the coaches when they reached the end of the line, and again when he backed onto them for the return journey. He simmered angrily while the fireman fastened the coupling.



No-one noticed a rattle from beneath Henry's footplate as he snorted away, and soon the train was running well.

"Hurry, hurry, hurry," puffed Henry. Faster and faster they went. At last Henry began to feel better.

Suddenly he heard a crack from below his cab.

"Look out!" shouted the driver. He applied the brakes while the fireman scrambled forward to the footplate. He was just in time. Both men watched in horror as a widening gap opened between Henry and his tender.



Henry stopped as soon as he could. The automatic brake halted his tender and the train some way behind.

“We must drop Henry’s fire,” said the driver urgently. “It will be dangerous to let him boil dry now that we can’t get more water from the tender.”

The fireman agreed.

“Sorry, old boy,” he said to Henry. “Just when we’d got it going nicely too. But if you hadn’t banged about so much you wouldn’t have broken your tender coupling.”



While the fireman dealt with the fire, the driver went back to tell the signalman what had happened. When he returned he found Henry completely hidden in a huge cloud of black smoke, which billowed from beneath his cab.

The fireman emerged, choking.

“Henry’s fire set the sleepers alight,” he spluttered. “You stay here – I’m going to ’phone the fire-brigade.”

The driver eased Henry clear of the blaze, and then Edward came to take his train on. Henry felt most uncomfortable.



Workmen made Henry a temporary coupling. They rejoined him to his tender, and then the driver and fireman lit a new fire and drove him gently home.

Edward, who had of course seen everything, told the others. They were careful what they talked about that night.

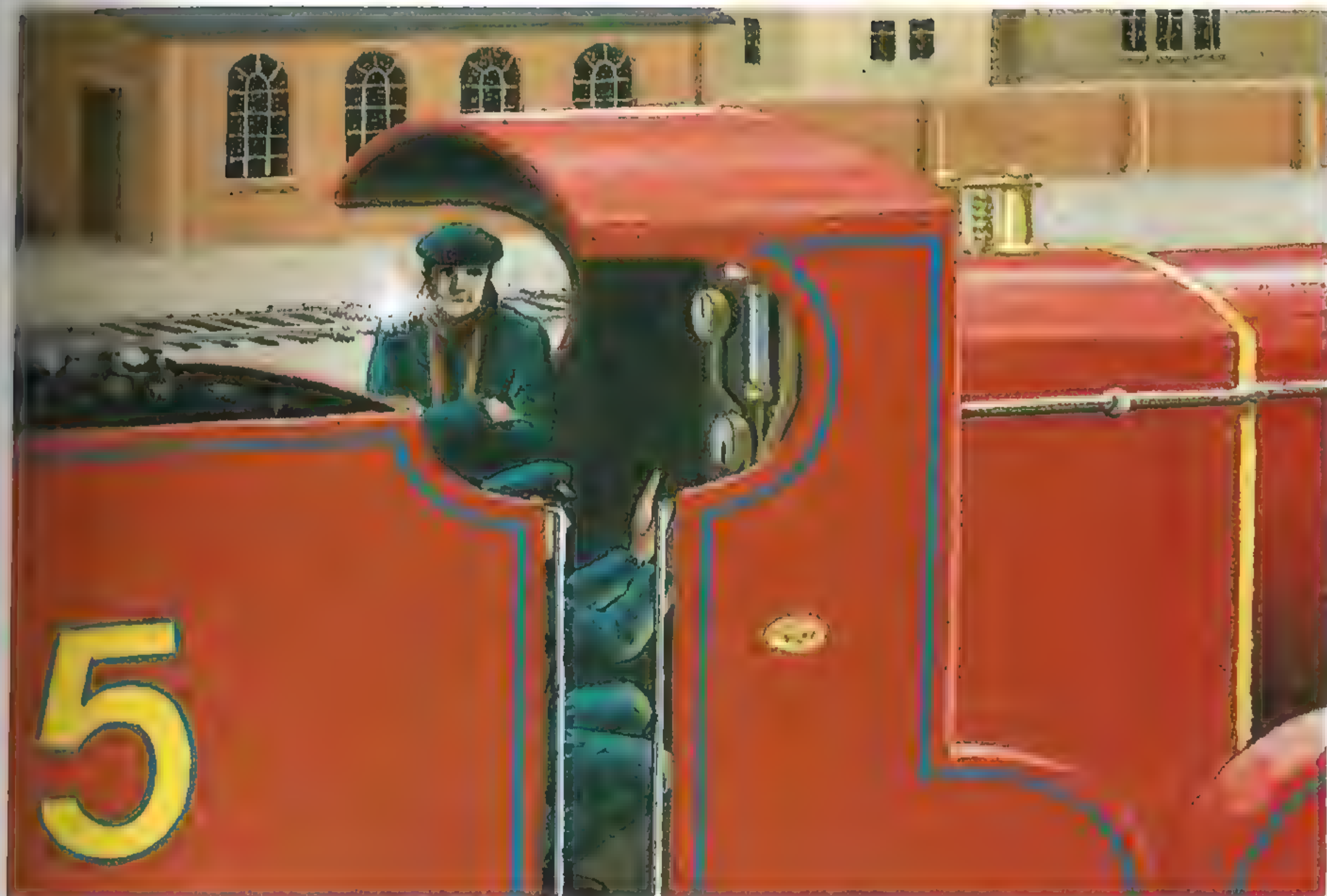
As for Henry, he was touchy on the subject of fires for some time afterwards. But James was quick to notice that from then on Henry stopped making rude remarks about the colour of fire-engines.



Deep Freeze

WINTER had come, and for many days now had held everything in an icy grip. The countryside was frozen hard, trees were white with frost, and icicles hung from bridges and water-columns. Mercifully there was little snow.

“Too cold for that, thank goodness,” shivered James’s driver, as he and the fireman huddled on the sheltered side of the cab. James had an open footplate, and every day his crew came to work muffled to the eyebrows in scarves and jerseys.



Sometimes water-columns froze too, and then the engines could not get the water they needed. But this never happened at the Works station, and one day, when the frost seemed harder than ever, James's driver stopped him beside the water-column there.

"We'll give you a good topping-up while we can," he said. "There's no telling when we might get some more."

James shivered as the icy water cascaded into his tender, but he knew his driver was right.



They filled James's tank to the brim, because the fireman forgot to tell the driver to turn the tap off. Water overflowed onto James's tender, making him shiver again.

"Right," said the fireman, jumping down to the footplate. "Let's be off – I want to warm myself up shovelling coal."

"We can't go yet," laughed the driver. "They haven't finished loading the luggage van."

"Well I wish they'd hurry," grumbled the fireman, blowing on his hands. "I'm frozen from standing on that tender."



All engines have a tap called an injector. It allows the driver or fireman to transfer water from the tender to the boiler, and is very important. Without it the water-level in the boiler could become too low to make steam properly.

They had not gone far before James felt thirsty.

“I need a drink, please,” he said.

His driver switched on the injector but nothing happened. The fireman tried his duplicate; still nothing.

“I’ve got such a pain,” groaned James.



“Your injector’s failed,” said his driver. “Blockage in the pipe most likely. We’ll have to stop and deal with your fire – can’t go on without water.”

“Don’t set the sleepers on fire,” pleaded James. “Henry would never let me forget it.”

The fireman laughed.

“You’ll be all right if we just damp you down,” he said. “There’s no need to throw the fire out, as Henry did.”

They stopped near a signalbox and James’s driver asked the signalman to telephone for help.

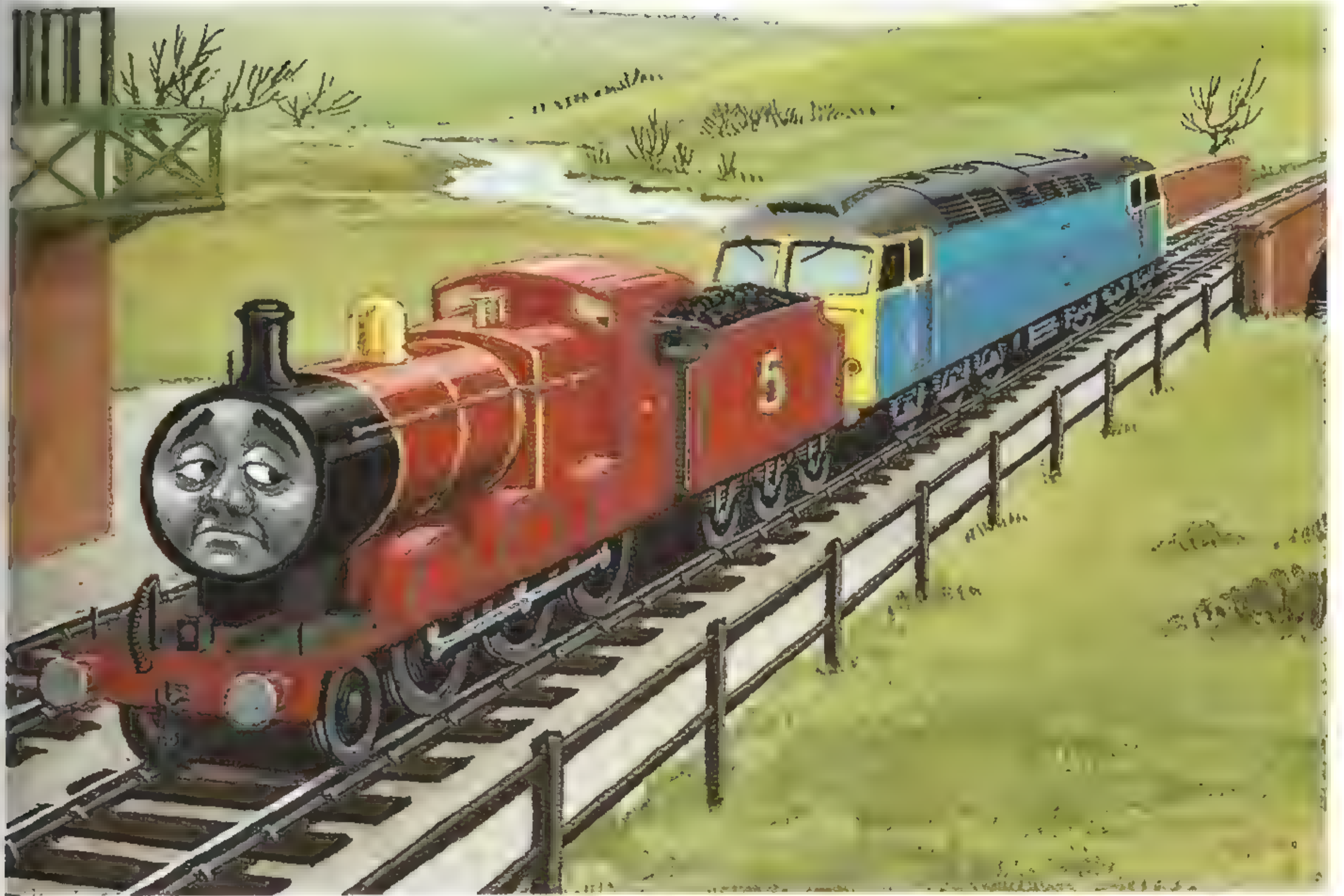


The Works sent a diesel, whom James had never met, to help him.

“Rescued by a diesel,” he snorted disgustedly. “It’s degrading. I won’t go!”

But he soon changed his mind, because now that his fire was down his boiler was cooling and he could feel the icy wind.

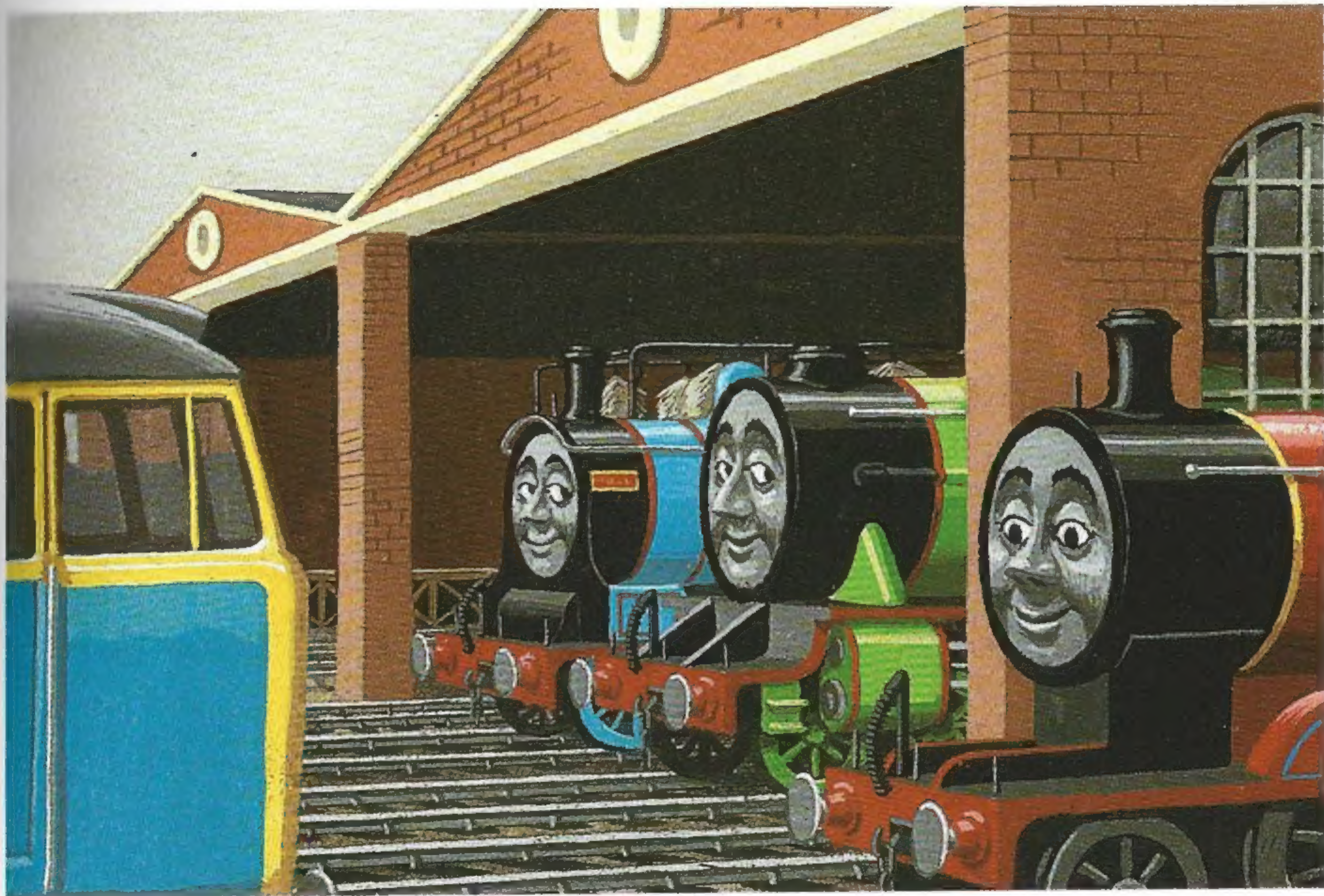
The diesel was friendly. James was quiet at first, but by the time they reached the works the diesel had won him over and the two of them were chatting like old friends.

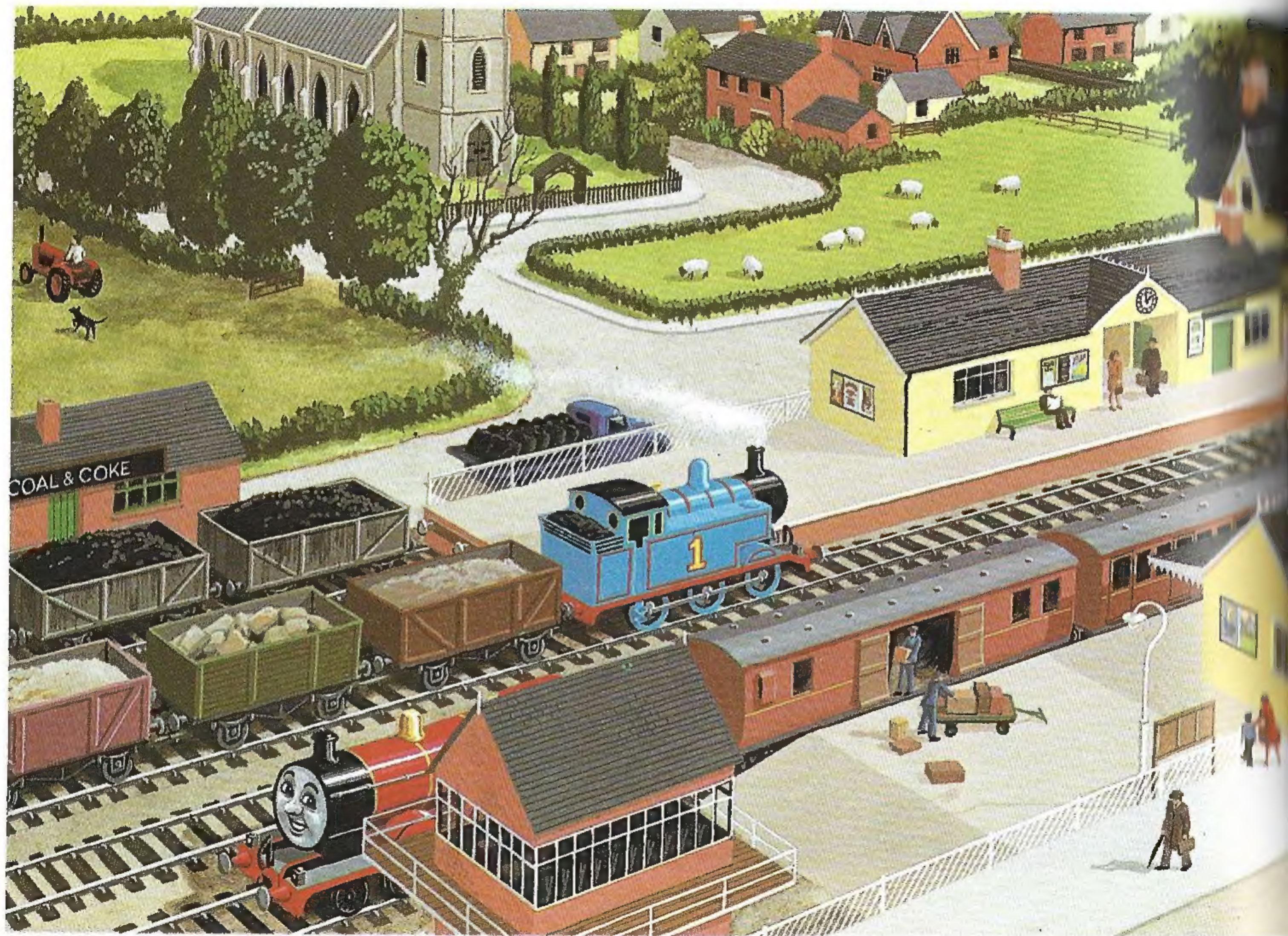


At the Works, James's fireman climbed onto the tender. He tried to open the filler-cap but couldn't.

"There's your answer, James," he said. "Your filler-cap's frozen solid. That's because the water overflowed. Ice is stopping air from getting into the tank, so the injectors can't work. You'll be all right when the ice melts."

He was, and that wasn't all. Thanks to his new friend from the Works, even James now admits that diesels can be useful engines too.



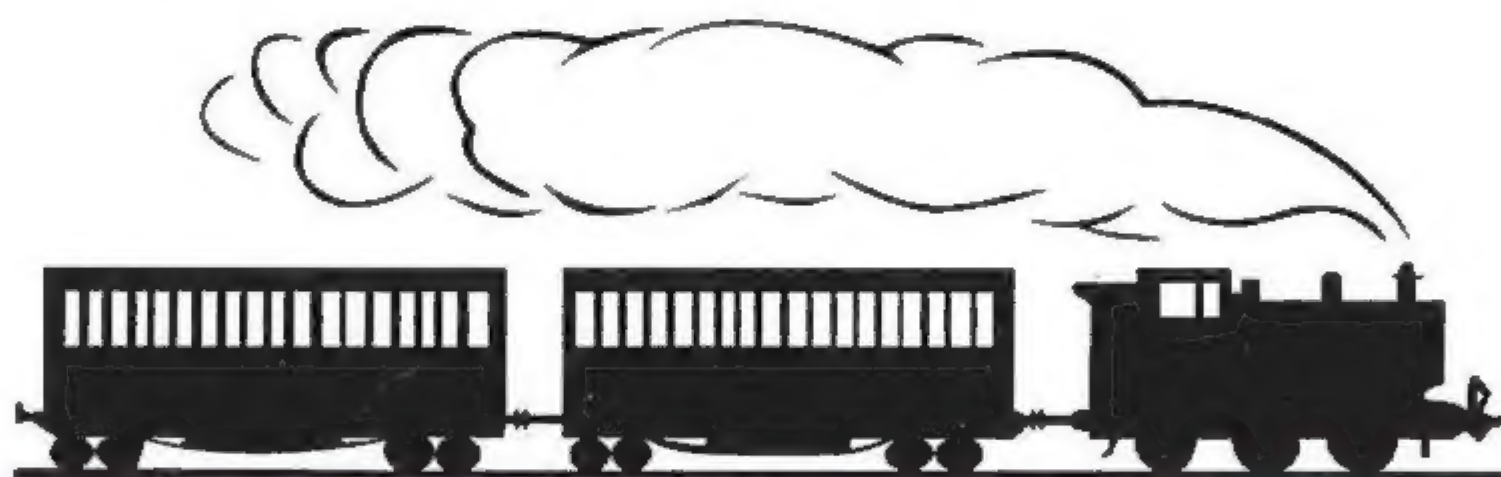




James and the Diesel Engines

CHRISTOPHER AWDRY

James didn't like diesels: 'Mixed-up engines – how can they know if they're coming or going?' he demanded. Sometimes his dislike was certainly justified, but then one day one of the Fat Controller's new diesels came to his rescue. After that, James had to agree that even diesels had their uses.



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